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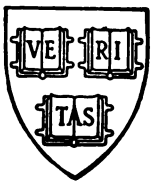

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THE MORMON MENACE

THE MORMON MENACE

A DISCOURSE

BEFORE THE

NEW WEST EDUCATION COMMISSION

ON ITS FIFTH ANNIVERSARY
AT CHICAGO NOVEMBER 15 1885

BY

GEORGE WHITFIELD PHILLIPS

PASTOR OF PLYMOUTH CHURCH

WORCESTER MASSACHUSETTS
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CHARLES ELLIOTT PERKINS
MEMORIAL COLLECTION

"There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee O Israel. Neither will I be with you any more except ye destroy the accursed . . . . . from among you."—JOSHUA 7:12, 13.

"Spare thy people O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach."—JOEL 2:17.

DISCOURSE.

The first of these writings affirms the loss of divine favor to whatever scheme of colonization or state-building that attempts to carry by covering up a great iniquity. The brilliant opening of Joshua's campaign for the possession of the land was checked by the bad faith of one man in trying to make gain out of something God had given over to destruction. No more success against the enemy till the sin of Achan, his greed for the spoils, was avenged.

The forbidden thing in the midst of the camp of our New West cluster of coming states, indexed by this occasion as with burning finger-point, is the Mormon menace.

The second writing named is a patriotic prayer, good for all time when any scourge, like locusts to the oriental farmer, has smitten the land. "Spare Thy people O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." No sentiment is more deeply imbedded in the history of our country, starting at Plymouth Rock and carried westward by the early migrations, than that our splendid public domain is a sacred trust. These vast prairies, fat bottom lands, mountains packed with treasure, have ever been esteemed by the devout as a divine heritage. When, therefore, any part of the country is menaced with moral evil, it concerns all the rest to come to the relief of the exposed point. The body politic, the family, our common Christianity have all been infected by the poison of polygamy.

The morals of Salt Lake are felt by the cities of the interior and the East. The life of our people is so intertwined by trade and travel and social sympathies that moral isolation is impossible. Any part of our common country tainted with a

system so repulsive in itself, and freighted with mischief to a whole group of future states, as that which has fastened its cancerous roots on the New West cannot be innocently left alone. The destiny of those states is wrapped up with our own.

Patriotism and piety alike join in the passionate cry, "Spare Thy people O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach."

The New West Education Commission, now entering on its sixth year of beneficent work with gratifying omens of enlarging power and popular confidence, is the practical embodiment of this prayer. Its origin was as timely as its management has been to the credit of the intelligence and piety of the brethren who have given it a home in this metropolis on the lakes. This society is both an index of the vitality of the churches of the interior, and a happy bond uniting the eastern members of the Congregational household with their younger sisters here. It has made the people aware of a great need, and has fairly captured not a few of our most intelligent givers, by its adroit employment of the Christian school to bar the further spread of the Mormon delusion. It has been said in regretful humor that "the heroic epoch of missions is past." Our work is the happy correction of that error. Who shall bemoan the decay of Christian heroism when for Christ's sake educated young women, the flower of our colleges and homes, are ready to go into the exile of frontier settlements, braving the foul environment which polygamy creates, and conquering suspicion, intrigue and bravado by the irresistible appeal of an unselfish life, the very copy of the Master? Such examples are worth all they cost as tonic to the faith of the church. They challenge friendly public sentiment. They speak home to the consciences of our rulers at Washington, where the signs of sensibility to a long-tolerated crime against Christian civilization were never so many and encouraging as now. Christianity, the missionary religion, America, the missionary nation, are correlated ideas that ought somehow to be burned into the intelligence and conscience of the youth of our churches, as the coloring of the decorator is fixed upon the wares of the

potter in the fierce heat of the furnace. The test of vitality in a church is the intensity, the range of its forth-putting philanthropies. Says Lecky: "If it be true Christianity to dive with a passionate charity into the darkest recesses of vice, to irrigate every quarter of the earth with the fertilizing stream of an almost boundless benevolence, to include all the sections of humanity in the circle of an intense and efficacious sympathy, then, never since the days of the Apostles has it been so healthy and vigorous as at present." So acute an observer as Max Müller puts Christianity first of the three missionary religions, and finds the key of its success in "the degree to which our love of God is manifested in our love of man. That is the gospel that will conquer all other religions because it will win the hearts of all men." Such testimony from such sources is bracing to our courage; but the concrete examples of the power of the Christian teacher to overcome prejudice, to gain the hearts of fanatical enemies which this Commission furnishes, are better backing for our faith in the sufficiency of the Christian religion than anything else. The argument of successfully applied Christianity never fails to convince doubters. Whenever it meets the sins that cramp the individual and pollute society with effectual remedies, when it so lets in the light as to lay the ghosts of superstition and set the people forward upon a better future, it still bears the mint-marks of its genuineness. Why did slavery die when it did? Not alone because there were "thinking bayonets" in the conflict; but more, because that system could not longer survive the clarified and quickened conscience of so many people just emerging from the religious revivals that form the prelude of its downfall. Just so, social evils remaining among us are, one by one, being made aware of some omnipresent force antagonizing their spread. Analyze the influence, and it invariably proves to be some one of the allotropic forms of Christianity. Here it is pitted against the saloon; there it confronts socialism; there literary and pictorial leprosy; there the perversion of the Lord's day; and finally, it offers its peaceful offices as trustworthy arbitrator between the angry competitors, labor and capital.

Applied Christianity is the only thing holding out a ray of reasonable hope for the successful treatment of these and like ugly problems now coming to the front. It is an old and tried solvent of hard questions, and fully equal, we doubt not, to its present task. The Mormon iniquity is better understood now than it was when this society began seriously to deal with it six years ago. Some facts but lately ascertained and not yet generally noticed may well challenge special attention.

1. MORMONISM IS THOROUGHLY POSSESSED WITH THE MISSIONARY IDEA. It proposes to convert the Gentiles, and is doing this with astonishing success. It is clearly within Max Müller's famous definition of a "living religion," viz.: Systematic self-propagation. With three other old and still aggressive faiths, this "Latter Day Sainthood" aspires to dominion. This feature differences it from all other organized systems of evil that taint our civilization. We are but just beginning to make note of the far reaching, intense propaganda of the Mormon church. The American Board, just entering the last quarter of its first century of luminous history, has but 422 missionaries of both sexes sent abroad; and its whole force of laborers, including native converts, numbers only 2,600. The Mohammedan missionaries in the training school at Cairo, as Dr. Field informs us, are not less than ten thousand. He says he saw two solid acres of turbans sitting on the ground delving into the mysteries of the Koran.

Mormonism was unheard of till 1827. Its lewd founder did not attempt to formulate his own morals into the alleged revelation of polygamy till 1843. Besides, this church has been forced back by a better social environment from one position to another, till it made a stand forty years ago in the solitude of the vast region beyond the Rockies. That pathetic migration was borne with a heroism worthy of a better cause. Entering Utah with six thousand jaded pilgrims, two score years ago, that social monstrosity has steadily grown till it now numbers 150,000. And they are pushing their new settlements into every choice locality with a vigor and industry never so intense as at this moment. With these facts before

us, it ill becomes us to dwarf our estimate of the dimensions of the Mormon menace. It is large enough to be seen across the continent by any open-eyed patriot. If we have any Christian steel about us, here is an enemy worthy of it. Look at this treasonable, fraudulent system, palmed off on the credulous by cunning leaders, directing a vast scheme of colonization on the public lands, sustained by a steady influx of converts from the peasantry and hopeless artizans of other countries. Is not the problem forced upon us by the Mormon church too large, complex and serious to be lightly put aside or treated as a trifling local blemish that will cure itself if left unmolested?

The abnormal fertility of the Mormon household augmented by the stream of converts flowing into the New West from the missionary zeal of two thousand trained apostles, has peopled the Mormon region ten times as fast as the average increase of the country at large. Can we who see this thrifty iniquity, note its defiant tone and treasonable attitude towards the government, as well as the social evils clustering about it, yet refuse our utmost endeavor to bar its farther development? Another motive calling us to antagonize the Mormon menace with the Christian school is,

2. THE MISSIONARY TYPE OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY WILL BE SO FAR DISCREDITED AS WE NEGLECT TO PUSH FORWARD THIS WORK. We are constantly affirming the efficacy of the gospel to supplant delusions, overcome error and make society morally wholesome. But we magnify its far away successes to the disadvantage of results nearer home. We point with just satisfaction to the Christian transformation now in progress in Japan; to great churches rejuvenated in the old cities of the East; to distant islands where improved morals and intellectual awakening bear testimony to the work of some of the best spirits our churches have produced. These remote triumphs are most encouraging.

But one of the living seers of our Zion has lately told us that " no great lift to the foreign work can be expected till we make the Gospel more widely and deeply felt in this country."

There is no reason for our apparent preference to attack the enemy at long range if we have entire confidence in our superiority to him in close quarters. Why not meet this iniquity on our own soil with the same expectancy of success that we all feel for our evangelical work in India or Japan? The prestige of American missions abroad is admitted. The stars and stripes stand for freedom wherever seen; they are the accepted sign of popular intelligence, domestic sanctity and pure morality which our proclaimed Christianity is believed to secure. We have everything at stake in deserving the high estimate put upon our religion by other nations, while their out-reaching millions are solemnly concerned in the vigor and breadth of the grip which our intelligent piety has upon our whole country. It is grateful to our feelings to be quoted as furnishing models of Christian institutions to the rising states of the old world. But when the blot of Mormonism is discovered who will respect the model? How this tolerated disgrace breaks the force of the appeal we might otherwise make to emulate our example! When we criticise the morals of the heathen they can properly turn upon us with the biting retort, "Physician, heal thyself." "Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone." The Zulu, enriching his Kraal by the purchase of as many wives as his lust might suggest and his means allow, has made no fruitless appeal for the missionary of the Gospel that builds domestic morality on the holy union of one man and one woman. The patriarch* of the mission that has lifted the Zulu into the field of European politics is still alive. Is polygamy in Salt Lake less odious, or degrading, or sinful, than in Africa? Does it improve upon nearer inspection and the comparative ease with which we can reach and cure it?

The same loveless marriages, only more debasing by the woman's servitude to her master in the mask of a saint; the same unnatural crimes against the family that have made the appeal for missionaries to the "Dark Continent" heard by some of the choice youth of our churches, exist but a little distance hence. Ours is the social blot which stands out, as it

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* Rev. ALDEN GROUT.

ought, only more black and sharply outlined by contrast with the intense light of Christian civilization upon which it has fallen. Shall the cry of our own land go unheeded? The most needful thing suggested by the situation in the New West is intensified sensibility to the large demand upon us for Christian helpfulness from the blighted heart of our own continent. But Mormonism, tolerated and thrifty here, not only tends to neutralize our Christianity abroad, but,

3. IT BREAKS THE FORCE OF OUR CHRISTIAN REACTION ALIKE UPON THE FOREIGN PEOPLES ALREADY HERE AND THOSE STILL POURING IN UPON US. Never, since the tidal wave of northern tribes broke over southern Europe and shattered the empire of Cæsar, has the passion for migration been so phenomenal as of late; and America is the point toward which, year after year, this mighty drift sets. I am bringing no news in this statement to a city four-fifths of whose entire population are essentially foreign. But you only index the broader problem given us in the east as truly as on the spacious frontier opening in the west. How assimilate to the American type this vast constituent of alien people? That type, as seen in our history has Christianity, home, intelligence, freedom as its outline features. Whatever makes against these in any part of our country so far weakens our proper influence upon the incoming stranger. Mormonism is in open revolt with every one of these American ideas. Tolerated on the public lands; preempting, as it is rapidly doing, future states, the home of millions of our immigrant citizens, it thwarts by its presence on the ground in advance those social and religious beginnings which ensure safe citizens in after years. The original stamp set upon a town by its founders has strange tenacity. The materials, when plastic, may be shaped at will by a strong hand in new communities; but when once fixed, the existing order defies change. It has to be broken up and recast in the heat of some reform before which nothing but the materials of society survive. The awakened interest now showing itself touching our foreign-born population is auspicious though tardy. Our first duty to them is to rid the country they seek

of its clinging corruptions. Disinfect the mephitic air of cities; make polygamy odious in the New West; meet those escaping from a hard lot in other lands with a better environment. As it now is, the moral conditions of the New West are unwholesome for the settler.

Like a malarious marshy region that must be ditched to relieve it of its stagnant water before people can fix their homes there and live, so every spot tainted with the presence of Mormonism needs the timely improvement of the Christian school before it is fit for a home for any one, especially the foreigner during the transition period. The best stock may lack sufficient sturdiness to bear transplanting when the ground and exposure are favorable. What issue may we fairly expect where the stock is poor, the ground steeped in stagnant water or full of foul seed in advance? A family of paupers from the work-house, upon whom the gates of Castle Garden had been shut, dropped by the returning steamer and huddling on the dock of an Irish port, is the most pathetic picture of our first parents expelled from Paradise I have ever seen. There is a strange fascination in America for the poor, the hopeless, the discontented. Nothing is likely to turn back this mighty throng, with their faces set westward. With how many of them the disenchantment comes too late for retreat. Certainly it is so in the case of every woman who has been caught in the toils of the wily Mormon. Unless these strangers are met on their arrival here with Christian ideals, with influences issuing from school and church, they may turn a possible paradise into a moral pandemonium. How can we approach the immigrant, of whatever country, with a consistent appeal to him to slough off his old world vices and become an American, when that word covers so gigantic a sin, so impudent a fraud, as Mormonism? Evidently our powers of national assimilation are weakened to the extent that this iniquity goes unrebuked or is suffered to enlarge its dimensions.

I do not think it strange, when we recall the Divine method of dealing with great social wrongs, that this Mormon problem is laid at the doors of the American people with such urgent seriousness as it is now taking on. The whole question of the

family is wrapped up in it. The bold, aggressive attitude of slavery a quarter of a century ago unmasked its real character and fairly forced the government to strangle it. Mormonism, in the same way, is unwittingly digging its own grave. It is so shocking the moral sense of the people that the safety of the family as the true social unit is likely to be more sacredly regarded. In the glare of recent divorce legislation and other symptomatic phenomena, who can doubt that a strong undertow is driving the American family away from its only safe moorings, the Biblical idea? The Mormon menace is already setting the thoughtful upon fresh investigations. It is making its mischiefs apparent to courts and senates and churches, and the outraged heart of Christian women in every State, and the uprising against it will be as general as the light revealing its repulsiveness becomes intense. Polygamy as against the Christian family is the issue presented at the center of American civilization in the near future. The world is making note of the ghastly experiment. Is it not strange that we who have so much at stake should be so little concerned for the result? This modern effort to fasten the old curse of polygamy on the new world will not be suffered to succeed. But its defeat is no easy task. Such sins die hard. The expulsive power of a stronger force for good is the only sufficient social renovator. The world's moral memory needs to be refreshed occasionally. The woes which Old Testament polygamy uniformly let loose upon families and states have been too much overlooked. Scholars have ceased to note, as they should, the awful punishment of domestic pollution speaking its warnings from the pages of the old Greek tragedies. The protest of the mediæval church against the Mohammedan harem seems to have lost its force as against the sin of our age and country. Has not the Mormon menace a manifest mission? It is here to challenge by its defiant attitude the vigorous antagonism of the church and the nation. With its burning shame so near us as to scorch our eyeballs, what excuse can we plead for our indifference to this standing outrage upon the Christian law of the family? The logical end of our fast and loose habits touching the national regard for that law is so manifest that

none but the blind fail to see it. It is written in the dejected face of every wife that has had to endure the crucifixion of being compelled to share with a another what God intended not to be divided. It blights every fine feeling and smothers hope wherever it lays its hand. It is the subtle net-work that has enmeshed thousands of the daughters from lowly families across the sea and finally dragged them to a fate worse than death. Such are some of the counts in the heavy indictment upon which polygamy stands convicted. Another aspect of the menace which Mormonism offers is,

4. ITS INTENSE DISLOYALTY TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. It takes no pains to disguise its hostile attitude. Citizenship demands at least some elementary knowledge of our laws and the rulers whom the people elect. Mormonism leaves its swarms of children in dense ignorance upon all points touching the extra priestly government under which they live; nay, it takes pains to embitter their youth with a hatred towards it that will be hard to unlearn. Their temples are seminaries of treason. They have repeatedly insulted the flag. Church tithes are the only taxes they willingly pay. The presence of the army awes them into outward submission, but there is no evidence of a spark of loyal sentiment among them. Just now the dockets of the federal courts are growing bulky with cases against polygamists. Active enforcement of the laws is filling the jails or hurrying socalled saints away from home on other than missionary journeys, while the cry of persecution echoes drearily from the Mormon press and platform. But we mistake if we imagine that soldiers and courts can cure the plague of the New West. Law when enforced leaves the evil spirit still in possession. What Utah needs is light and grace and social purity. The Christian school, not the courts, is the source of these. The law is only a sturdy schoolmaster necessary to hold the unwhipped boy in decent restraint till the value of study, order and ideas comes in to assert its control. That process is and must be a growth requiring time. Our New West scheme of education puts a knowledge of the government, respect for the authority represented by

the Stars and Stripes among its primary lessons. A single brave young woman, fresh from her Normal School training, with the spirit of her Christian home and church as her inspiration and leader, finds herself at the head of a little school in one of the farming valleys of Utah. Remote from the intenser Mormon feeling that rules at Salt Lake, the contagion of this teacher's spirit won the people's hearts. Their interest soon took shape in a school house of logs, built and rudely fitted up by their contributed labor in the canyon or on the school edifice. Such utter lack of knowledge was there in that valley, of any authority beyond that of Mormon officials, that the idea of "our beautiful flag as an object lesson," flashed into the teacher's mind. It took wings and flew eastward. The response was immediate. A good old Dane brings a tall, straight cedar from the canyon and sets it near the free school. A woman's deft hand shapes the simple gear for raising the new first flag of the town. To the country folk present it was a unique occasion. Lusty cheers greeted the ensign as it mounted to its place, flinging off its prophecy of a better day from its fresh starry folds. And there it has been teaching its mute lesson ever since. And the teacher's heart is glad over her two years' service, and the women of the church in the old Bay State who paid her salary and are still taking care of her successor are well satisfied that they have never invested more wisely in any work for our country or the Master's kingdom. Multiply such centres of influence by the number of our schools, now scarcely less than forty, infuse a like lesson of patriotism and keep it alive by daily allusions before the almost three thousand pupils now in attendance, and it is plain that we have at least made a hopeful beginning in breaking down the disloyalty that separates the Mormon from his country as by a wall of granite.

But while we aim to plant the New West with schools of loyalty, we must not seem to neglect the Christian character of our work. These schools are and must be Christian schools, taught by select Christian men and women, or they are nothing to the purpose.

This idea must be held to with the most rigorous insistance. Our teachers are as truly missionaries of Christ's Gospel as if engaged in planting churches. The only difference is, the school is the clearance of the ground, the creation of materials without which it is impossible to have a church such as Christ intends. Close upon the track of the teacher must come the church, the natural successor, calling for the pastoral nurture of some of the best men our seminaries can produce. It is a delusion to think that this work, so well begun by women, can be pushed to its proper issue by them. The moral renovation of the New West calls for men qualified to deal with the practical problems that arise wherever organized Christian society is emerging from barbarism. The home missionary pastor must speedily lay his hand upon the elements vitalized by the free school, mould them into churches, nor take off his steadying hold till intelligent piety secures them against falling under the sway of delusions and vices that must long haunt such communities. Unless we make vigorous church-life the dominant force at every point we are occupying, we shall see painful relapses into their old ways among supposed converts. Sabbath schools, connected as they are with all our day schools, do much in the right spiritual direction; but the goal is not reached till the church comes forth with its diversified ministries to gather up and express the best religious life of the people.

Speaking for the churches of the East, which have in unmistakable ways shown their interest in the work you were the first to attempt, I do not hesitate to say that, with our outlook,

5. CHICAGO IS THE STRATEGIC POINT FROM WHICH TO OPERATE AGAINST THE MORMON MENACE. The missionary societies that originated long before this city of majestic growth was born, still keep their headquarters in the East where the revenues have been so largely provided. It was but fitting and natural that your noble scheme for the redemption of the New West should domesticate itself here. The goodly child is yours. But we of the older states crave a share in the maintenance of

it. No monopoly of so grand and national a work as is proposed will be permitted by the New England brethren. We expect to be distanced ere long by others more richly endowed with the sinews of this holy war, but for the present we shall continue to place our youthful ally side by side with the old and tried agencies for the Christianization of our land. Chicago is nearer to the field covered by our schools than Boston by a thousand miles. The base of supplies, commander's headquarters, should not be too far from the fighting. Out of the fierce struggle you are making with the principalities and powers of evil at your own doors is born the capacity for this frontier war with fanaticism. The atmosphere of your churches, surcharged with city missionary enterprise, is favorable to the entertainment of broader plans such as fall within the scope of our present thought. The laymen of these strong city churches need to have some great Christian task constantly in hand to preserve the proper harmony of their religious and everyday life. What vast operations are the business men of this city accustomed to, affecting, as they do, the market of the great staples of living throughout the world! Your merchants touch the nerve-center of prices for bread and meat everywhere. Nothing petty in plan or timid in purpose where Christ's kingdom is concerned ought to be tolerated by men trained and broadened by such affairs. One conspicuous loss from its councils is felt by our society as it takes up the work of another year. Where from among our best are the successors of our lamented leader, Colonel Hammond? When that princely Christian used to look afar, across the rivers and the Rockies, note the trend of travel and the dim outlines of emerging States, his thought took in other than railroad problems. His soul was filled with just anxiety as he became aware of the loathsome efflux which Mormonism was disgorging upon broad areas of the territorial lands. How grandly he tried to stay the spread of it, every page of our society's history bears record. The workers fall, but the work presses never so urgently as now, and all the omens are auspicious in every direction except that it is feared that the young men of the churches who have most at stake do not grasp the situa-

tion so as to take determined hold of the work to be done. It is a serious question for every coming citizen to ponder how long we can safely go on begetting towns and states with the birth-mark of polygamy upon them. There is a kind of encouragement in the daily reports of the press that prominent Mormons are being convicted of their crimes and the full penalty of the law is enforced. Outraged public sentiment is at last expressing itself, and no mask of religion will in future avail to cover offenders from the resentment which has been aroused. The conflict this fanatical despotism, backed by so much ignorance, is prepared to make against the laws is likely to be a long one.

The hands of the Congressional Commission now in power in Utah deserve the cordial support of the country. May not Mormon operations to make converts abroad be crippled if not thwarted by special instructions to our embassadors in foreign parts to exercise cautionary measures? Should not a friendly warning be sent out to those countries where the intrigue for converts is most practiced? But against the great and growing mass of ignorance and evil in the New West we are still obliged to turn for help to this Commission. It has but a brief history; but its facilities and prestige based upon actual results accomplished put us easily at the front among the recognized forces now antagonizing the Mormon menace. So the platform and the press of America understand and express it; while observers on the ground confirm the same view.

As we now see how Whitman's missionary inspiration was God's method of saving to the United States the whole Pacific Slope, a vast empire covering unbounded wealth in forest, soil and mine, so the pioneers and supporters of this New West Commission seem likely to prove the real deliverers of a great cluster of interior states from the shackles of priestly tyranny and the abiding blight of deified sensuality.

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